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CONSUMER TIME R- 166

THE LOWLY SPUD

NETWORK: NBC DATE: October 23, 1943

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL

2. MAN I: That's your money...buying food.

3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

4. JOHN: That's your money buying clothes.

5. SOUND: CASH REGISTER

6. MAN I: That's your money....buying a living in wartime.

7. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.....CLOSE DRAWER

8. JOHN: And this is CONSUMER TIME--taking you into partnership in a big national food problem--potatoes--Irish potatoes. As a full partner, you'll want to know what's going on--what's being done--what you can do. You'll want to know the facts. Here they are...

9. SOUND: PHONE BELL....AND PHONE CLICK.

10. MAN: (FILTER) Central Storage Warehouse, Mitchell speaking...What? Twenty more carloads of potatoes for us to store?...Sorry, we can only handle eight...and then we'll be full to the brim.... What are you going to do with the other twelve cars?...Just a moment, I'll switch you over to our Mr. Darby. Maybe he can help you....

11. DARBY: (FILTER) This is Darby...Sure, I know you can't eat twelve cars of potatoes...we've been taking all we can store...Well, hold on, I'm going to do something to help you....Now maybe Ridgeley can use three or four of those cars at the dehydrating plant...Yes, Ridgeley. Then call the Barnet Starch Company. They ought to be able to handle at least a couple of cars for starch. No I can't tell you what you can do with the others. Call me back later. You're welcome. Good bye.

12. JOHN: Yes, potatoes are quite a problem--a big problem and a worthwhile food problem that requires everybody's help to get the right solution.

13. FREYMAN: Johnny, I read that the nation is harvesting the biggest late potato crop on record.

14. JOHN: Yes, that's a fact, Mrs. Freyman. Looks like the late potato crop this year will be about 370,000,000 bushels. That's over 80,000,000 bushels more than last year.

15. FREYMAN: Say, that's wonderful.

16. JOHN: It's wonderful if we use these potatoes right and don't allow any of them to spoil.

17. FREYMAN: Well, we can't afford to do that...as individuals or as a nation.

18. JOHN: Of course not--but it's going to take teamwork from everybody to use this bumper potato crop without waste.

19. FREYMAN: What seems to be the difficulty?

20. JOHN: Well, the crop is so big--and it's being harvested so fast that there isn't enough storage space to handle it.

21. FREYMAN: Well, there's always dehydration, and starch making.

22. JOHN: The commercial dehydrators are going to be flooded with potatoes. So are the starch factories. They'll be working overtime--all the time--and still won't be able to handle the crop.

23. FREYMAN: You paint a dreary picture.

24. JOHN: It would be a dreary picture--except that the American people are going to be smart enough so it won't be dreary.

25. FREYMAN: Just how can we individuals help enough to avoid wasting a bumper potato crop?

26. JOHN: Greater use of potatoes in everyday meals will help plenty.

27. FREYMAN: That's not hard--because you can fix potatoes so many ways...all good.

28. JOHN: The keynote of the whole situation, however, is storage--home storage.

29. FREYMAN: Well, Johnny, we homemakers can't store an awful lot of potatoes at home.

30. JOHN: In terms of carloads, one home, can't store a whole lot of potatoes, but--

31. FREYMAN: I see--but--if every home will store a relatively small quantity --why, why there are so many homes--that the total amount stored will be tremendous--if everyone buys and stores a little more than usual.

32. JOHN: That's right--and that's exactly what has to be done if this huge potato crop is to be used for food--without waste.

33. FREYMAN: You know, Johnny, it's really quite easy to store potatoes.

34. JOHN: And when, Mrs. Freyman, did you become a potato storage expert?

35. FREYMAN: Never mind that, but yesterday I was visiting my friends, Jim and Rosemary Wilson (FADE) and if you think I didn't learn some practical things about the care and storage.....

36. ROSEMARY: You know, Mrs. Freyman, it may not be very polite to drag you out here in the back yard when you come to visit us.

37. FREYMAN: Well, Rosemary, I insisted, didn't I? I'm interested in this job Jim is doing.

38. SOUND: EARTH BEING SHOVELED INTO PLACE.

39. JIM: Maybe it doesn't look pretty, Mrs. Freyman, but this contraption I'm fixing is really going to help us store potatoes--and do we eat 'em!

40. FREYMAN: It looks like quite a gadget, Jim.

41. JIM: Well, I know it'll work. It's been tested by the Department of Agriculture.

42. FREYMAN: Why didn't you use your cellar for storing potatoes?

43. JIM: Cellars are often good storage places--but not ours--ours is too small....and dry...and hot. So I had to fix this back yard storage bin.

44. FREYMAN: Let's see. Looks like you started in with a barrel.

45. JIM: I certainly did. I just laid a barrel on its side, put straw around it and now I'm covering it so there'll be about six inches of dirt all over the barrel.

46. ROSEMARY: The potatoes go in the barrel, of course.

47. JIM: Yes, Mrs. Freyman--then you prop the barrel head against the open end and see that it too is protected with about six inches of dirt insulation.

48. FREYMAN: It's a little unhandy to get to the potatoes, isn't it?

49. JIM: A little bit. You have to remove the dirt at the end of the barrel and put it back again when you want to get a fresh supply of potatoes

50. FREYMAN: How many potatoes will this store?

51. JIM: Oh, something over 200 pounds.

52. FREYMAN: Would boxes work as well as barrels--because barrels are scarce?

53. JIM: Sure, boxes will work. As a matter of fact, you could simply make a cushion of straw, on the ground--put straw around your potatoes and then cover them with earth--making a dirt pile about the same shape as a pear.

54. FREYMAN: Potatoes sitting on straw protected with straw with dirt piled on them?

55. JIM: That's right. Only be sure to make a place for an opening at the top or the end--for ventilation. Lay a board big enough to cover it,over this ventilation opening...with some straw...to keep out severe cold and rain and snow.

56. FREYMAN: With this earth storage or barrel and earth storage method of keeping potatoes are there any particular tricks?

57. JIM: Yes, a few, Mrs. Freyman. Naturally, you cover the barrel or box --or earth pit to prevent freezing.

58. FREYMAN: Yes.

59. JIM: Then, it's a good idea to dig a shallow little ditch around the storage area--for drainage.

60. FREYMAN: Just a moment, you mentioned freezing.

61. JIM: Well, you mustn't let potatoes freeze because they spoil almost immediately when they thaw after being frozen. Another thing about storing potatoes is the trick of sorting....

62. ROSEMARY: Jim makes me do the job of sorting.

63. JIM: Well it's darned important to sort potatoes carefully before storing. You take out any that show cuts or bruised or any signs of decay or withering. They should be used first.

64. FREYMAN: I can see that it would be a bad idea to store unsound potatoes with the good ones.

65. JIM: That's right. Then too, when you're storing spuds--treat 'em gently.

66. FREYMAN: Are potatoes frail?

67. JIM: Well, they do bruise and they spoil a lot faster if they're bruised. Then, there's one other trick.

68. ROSEMARY: It's a good trick too, Mrs. Freyman.

69. JIM: You see, when potatoes are kept at a temperature of 40 degrees or lower for any length of time they actually get too sweet. So you bring in about a week's supply of potatoes and let them warm up in the kitchen about a week before using--so they'll lose an unnatural sweet taste.

70. FREYMAN: Jim, your storage idea is simple and it's good and it's workable for people who have back yards...but lots of people don't have back yards.

71. JIM: I know it...but back yard or no back yard...most people can store a considerable quantity of potatoes quite successfully.

72. ROSEMARY: Those cellars you mention are good potato storage places...if they're reasonably moist and cool. But, as Jim said, ours is small, dry and hot.

73. FREYMAN: You say "cool cellar". How cool is "cool"?

74. JIM: Oh, anywhere between 35 and 50 degrees.

75. FREYMAN: Couldn't back porches be used for potato storage?

76. JIM: That would depend on the climate--and on the back porches, Mrs. Freyman.

77. FREYMAN: Some of those closed in or partially closed in back porches--where the temperature doesn't go below freezing are excellent potato storage space..

78. JIM: Yes, such back porches are good...if you remember two things.

79. FREYMAN: And what are those two things, Jim?

80. JIM: Well, first, stored potatoes have to have some air circulation... ventilation. You can't seal 'em tight...they need air. Unless they get it they rot.

81. FREYMAN: Ventilation. What else?

82. JIM: Then, stored potatoes have to be covered up--kept dark--or they're likely to begin sprouting too soon.

83. ROSEMARY: Even if you don't have a back yard or the right kind of porch--a person can still help out a lot with potato storage, Mrs. Freyman.

84. FREYMAN: Even apartment dwellers?

85. ROSEMARY: In most cases, yes.

86. FREYMAN: And how do you go about storing when you'don't have either a back yard, a porch, or cellar?

87. ROSEMARY: You see, these late crop potatoes are hardy. Much hardier than the early, summer potatoes.

88. FREYMAN: Yes, I knew about that.

89. ROSEMARY: Well, actually, you can store 50 to 100 pounds of them in a hall closet...or in the typical kitchen bin...or both. And they'll keep from four to six weeks without spoiling.

90. FREYMAN: That's quite an idea.

91. ROSEMARY: Those bins at the bottom of some refrigerators--outside of the actual refrigerated part, of course...will hold 50 to 100 pounds of potatoes...and they keep beautifully.

92. FREYMAN: Well, now, suppose every family stored oh, say, 50 to 100 extra pounds of potatoes right now. How much would that help the natio al storage picture?

93. JIM: It would help plenty. Because that would mean storage space for 25 to 50 million bushels that we don't have now. Repeat that sam process a month or so from now, and you have 50 to 100 million bushels of extra storage.....

94. FREYMAN: I guess that would just about handle the potato storage problem.

95. JIM: You bet it would. And this is a situation where storing isn't hoarding. If you buy potatoes in large quantities right now... and store them properly...you're helping to preserve an important part of the nation's food supply.

96. FREYMAN: I'm going to have my husband fix us one of those back yard storage outfits...with an old barrel that's sitting in the garage.

97. ROSEMARY: Don't forget to store some in your kitchen, too, Mrs. Freyman. The back yard storage bin will keep potatoes 3 to 5 months...and you can store 4 to 6 week's supply in your kitchen.

98. FREYMAN: I'll be doing it. Naturally, Jim...you have an extra special interest in storing potatoes--because Rosemary can do more things with potatoes than any woman I know.

99. ROSEMARY: Thank you, Mrs. Freyman.

100. JIM: Rosemary has elevated potato cookery to one of the fine arts...if you ask me.

101. ROSEMARY: Now I am blushing. But it's a nice thing to say...particularly because today's our wedding anniversary.

102. FREYMAN: We mean it...and I wish I could put together a potato chowder lik you served tonight.

103. JIM: You ought to taste her potato pancakes. That's the secret reason I married her.

104. FREYMAN: I have tested them, and also her country style fried potatoes and her potato puffs. Rosemary, were all of your ancestors potato chefs?

105. ROSEMARY: Such flattery...and all it does is to force me into a confession.

106. FREYMAN: A confession?

107. ROSEMARY: Yes--the recipes for all of the things you mentioned...and a lot more--were appropriated by me from a leaflet put out by the Government.

108. FREYMAN: I want the name of that one--right now.

109. ROSEMARY: Well, it's a leaflet called "Potatoes In Low Cost Meals"--and it certainly is chock full of good tips on using Irish potatoes... and sweet potatoes, too.

110. FREYMAN: Is that where you got your candied sweet potato recipe, too?

111. ROSEMARY: It certainly is--and also the one for potato hot pot...with Irish potatoes.

112. JIM: I still say that when Rosemary fixes 'em, potatoes are romantic.

113. FREYMAN: Potatoes are a romantic food anyhow, Jim. You know, about 400 years ago, close to 1550, there lived an obscure Spanish priest, Hieronymus Cardan. He lived in an age when nearly every man's dream was quick riches...to be torn from the Indian Nations of th New World. But this man Cardan (FADE) had it in his mind that...

114. VOICE: (LOUD BELLOW--BUT AWAY FROM MIKE) All hands on deck. All hands on deck. Stand by to cut away the sails...stand by to cut away.. hurricane coming! Hurricane.....

115. SOUND: WIND WHISTLES FOR COUPLE OF SECONDS.

FOOTSTEPS--MEN RUSHING ON DECK. DOWN AND UNDER--OUT CLEAN FOR DIALOGUE:

116. PABLO: Hernando, Hernando...where do you run so swiftly?

117. HERNANDO: To the deck, you fool, to help with the sails. Join me.

118. PABLO: That you should call me fool! Let others run to tend the sails. Stay here with me. This is our chance.

119. HERNANDO: Our chance to go to the bottom of the ocean if the hurricane strikes us with all sails spread.

120. PABLO: A hurricane then, has blown from your head all thought of Fra Cardan's chest?

121. HERNANDO: That accursed monk watches his chest by day and by night. Less chance to rob it than for you to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

122. PABLO: Oh, but you are wrong...at least about the chest. Not two minute since, I saw Fra Cardan...speeding to deck with all the rest... to struggle with the sails.

123. HERNANDO: 'Tis the first time since he left Peru that he has come out of his cabin.

124. PABLO: True. Always he sits there--watching the chest. It must contain even rarer jewels than those taken by Pizzaro when he conquered the Inca nation.

125. HERNANDO: Even with Fra Cardan gone...the chest is well locked.

126. PABLO: Was I the finest pickpocket in all Spain for nothing? As he passed me he...he left his keys with me...unwittingly...but he left them.

127. HERNANDO: Pablo--you are a prince among thieves...A king of cutthroats. Let us enter Fra Cardan's cabin....quickly.

128. PABLO: Ho, our good priestling was in a hurry. He departed for deck so suddenly that he failed to lock the cabin door.

129. HERNANDO: And thus you are denied a chance to show your art in passing through locked doors...but hasten...open the door.

130. SOUND: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

131. PABLO: A miserable, ill furnished cabin...made beautiful by that lovely chest.

132. HERNANDO: Truly--a magnificent chest. He should not begrudge our taking a a few small handsfull of jewels. The chest will still retain enough to make him richer than the king.

133. PABLO: 'Tis only Christian that he should share with us. We perform a pious act in relieving the chest of too great a burden.

134. HERNANDO: Enough of babbling. Open the chest--that we may take riches for ourselves--and begone ere Fra Cardan returns. He hath a heavenly voice--but a skillful sword arm.

135. PABLO: As you say, brother...I shall open the chest.

136. SOUND: LOCKS BEING OPENED--HINGES CREAK UPWARD.

137. PABLO: By the grey locks of my sainted grandfather!

138. HERNANDO: Are the jewels then so lovely?

139. PABLO: Jewels! Look, brother of a donkey. Look--tell me, what does the chest contain?

140. HERNANDO: Let me see--why, why we have been cheated. The chest contains no jewels--simply potatoes--battatas as the Indians call them. This Fra Cardan is a madman...a chest full of potatoes and no jewels.

141. PABLO: Let's throw them overboard--in payment of this scruby trick he hath played us.

142. HERNANDO: Oh no. To do that would be great evil. I think he must be afflicted in the head. To molest such a one would be a mortal sin indeed.

143. PABLO: Aye, there is truth in what you say, Hernando. Let this crazy monk take his potatoes to Spain from Peru...and we must look elsewhere for jewels.

144. HERNANDO: Yes, Pablo. Was ever a man so stupid...loading a chest with potatoes when, without doubt, he could have had jewels--or at least gold. I wonder what the world is coming to....Potatoes!

PAUSE:

145. FREYMAN: So you see, Johnny, I had quite a potato visit with Jim and Rosemary Wilson.

146. JOHN: Indeed you did. And that leaflet, "Potatoes In Wartime Meals." Well, to get it--absolutely free--just write to CONSUMER TIME, War Food Administration, Washington (25) D. C.--and do include your name, address and station call letters.

147. FREYMAN: I'll do it, Johnny--right after you bring me up to date on the ration stamp picture.

148. JOHN: Well, the situation is unchanged on sugar. Stamps 14, 15 and 16 are each good for 5 pounds--through October 31--but 15 and 16 may be used for canning purposes only. Likewise, shoe stamp, 18 remains good until further notice with the new shoe stamp, Airplane A, becoming good on November 1.

149. FREYMAN: What's the story on meat, fat and oils stamps?

150. JOHN: Brown Stamps C, D, E and F are good through October 30. Brown Stamp G becomes valid tomorrow and is good through December 4.

151. FREYMAN: And what about canned fruits and vegetables--or the frozen fruits and vegetables?

152. JOHN: Blue Stamps X, Y and Z are good through November 20.

153. FREYMAN: Thanks. Have you planned ahead for next week, Johnny?

154. JOHN: Yes, next week we're going to insist that HOUSEWORK MUST BE LESS WORK in view of the fact that so many women must now produce war materials. The Chairman of the Woman's Advisory Committee of War Manpower Commission, Miss Margaret Hickey, will be with us.

155. FREYMAN: I'll see you next week--on CONSUMER TIME.

156. ANNOUNCER: Potatoes help to keep meals low cost--and tasty. Right now--potatoes are especially plentiful and you should use them in every possible way. To use them to even better advantage, you'll want the leaflet "Potatoes In Low Cost Meals". It's free--and it gives you a variety of thrifty recipes and methods for using both Irish Potatoes and sweet potatoes in a variety of delicious dishes. For your copy of "Potatoes In Low Cost Meals", just write to CONSUMER TIME, War Food Administration, Washington (25) D. C. Please include your name, address and call letters of the radio station over which you heard this program. The leaflet will be sent free.

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Script by Granville Dickey.

The program has come to you from Washington.

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